

interference to those who are listening on the reception frequency (it happens frequently).

Do not be discouraged before trying. If you need support or advice, contact any AMSAT members or the authors of this article. We hope to contact you on the sats!

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RMS Queen Mary, Memorial Day 2019

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In December 2018, Endaf Buckley, N6UTC, and I conducted a day-long demonstration of amateur radio satellite operation on the RMS Queen Mary, a former ocean liner and now a tourist attraction and hotel, anchored at the Port of Long Beach, California. Those operations, done under the W6RO call sign for the ship's Wireless Room, were successful. I wrote about this event in the January/February 2019 issue of the *AMSAT Journal*. When the Queen Mary's management started planning for a Memorial Day activity, including the W6RO station's plans to participate in the event, the ship's management requested satellite operations to be part of the W6RO Memorial Day plans.

The Queen Mary's Memorial Day activities were titled "Salute to Service," honoring the Queen Mary's service as a troopship during the Second World War. The Queen Mary, along with other ocean liners, transported military personnel to combat around the world. For the Memorial Day weekend, many of the ship's employees would dress

in costumes from the wartime period — lots of soldiers and sailors, some nurses, and even Winston Churchill. Plans included presentations and talks on the ship about the wartime period and the Queen Mary's role.

In keeping with the wartime theme, the Wireless Room created a scenario: the room has been damaged, so ship personnel took some backup radio equipment out on deck. W6RO had set up an HF station outside the Wireless Room. The story even covered the planned satellite operations, something that would have still been science fiction in the 1940s.

On Saturday, May 25, 2019, the W6RO HF station was being set up outside the Wireless Room, using some of the HF antennas installed above the Wireless Room. W6RO also operated WIRES-X for those using Yaesu's C4FM/Fusion radios. The W6RO satellite operations were set up on the Sports Deck, an open area next to the Wireless Room, near the ship's bow. This location was on the opposite end of the ship from the site used for the December 2018 satellite operations. The Memorial Day location actually was a better spot for satellite work because part of the vessel shielded the radios from some of the RF coming from the Port of Long Beach, including other cruise ships anchored nearby. The ship's bridge blocked the view to the west, towards the ocean.



W6RO at the Queen Mary Wireless Room. [All photos by Patrick Stoddard, WD9EWK, unless otherwise noted.]





Wartime Scenario

"Queen Mary Is Under Attack!"

Due to system failures from attack damage, the Queen Mary Wireless Room has taken its backup radio equipment out on deck. Witness Wireless Room operators attempt to summon aid and keep the ship in contact with the outside world. Observe how a Signal Corps officer uses top-secret experimental radio equipment to make contact and pass messages using communications satellites that had been secretly launched by the U.S. during the war.

Located on our Sports Deck



"Winston Churchill" and wife preparing for radio address.



David Akins, N6HHR, and Paul Dyke, G2PA, at W6RO.



Patrick Stoddard, WD9EWK, and Joaquin Solana, XE1R/KE0SPY, at W6RO.

Memorial Day weekend satellite operations on the ship started with AO-92 in the late morning. The first pass covered the central and western portions of the continental U.S., along with parts of Canada and Mexico. A total of 13 contacts were logged in the span of 7 minutes during the AO-92 pass, with stations in all 3 of those countries — a great start to the weekend. W6RO operated on 3 FM satellites (AO-91, AO-92, SO-50), as well as 5 SSB/CW satellites (AO-7, CAS-4A, CAS-4B, FO-29, XW-2C), for a total of 57 contacts on 10 different passes. Endaf, N6UTC, was also operating as W6RO on WIRES-X, along with the other W6RO activities on HF and satellites.

During the afternoon, "Winston Churchill" visited the W6RO station, accompanied by his wife and a military aide. After inspecting the station, Winston sat down behind the microphone at the HF station for some pictures, as if he was preparing to make a radio address to "allied forces."

Sunday morning, May 26, started with an XW-2A pass just after 1600 UTC, followed by the first of two AO-92 passes. AO-92 was in the L/V mode, and we were ready to work that with my standard L/V setup - an Alinco DJ-G7T for the 1.2 GHz uplink, a Kenwood TH-D74 for the 2-meter downlink, and two antennas (a 10-element 1.2 GHz Yagi, tied onto the handle of an Elk Antennas 2m/70cm log periodic). Endaf worked the first AO-92 L/V pass, logging 5 contacts with stations from southern California to Texas. I worked the later AO-92 L/V pass to the west, logging two more contacts with W5SAT in Las Vegas and N6NUG in San



Endaf Buckley, N6UTC, working AO-92 L/V mode, as W6RO.



Patrick Stoddard, WD9EWK, preparing to work CAS-4B as W6RO.



Endaf Buckley, N6UTC, working CAS-4A as W6RO.

Diego. W6RO also showed up on the AO-91 and SO-50 FM satellites, and more SSB/CW satellites (CAS-4A, CAS-4B, FO-29, XW-2C). Forty-six contacts were logged on 11 passes Sunday.

Monday, May 27 was Memorial Day, with many visitors wandering around the Queen Mary. W6RO was visited by costumed members of the ship's crew, and we explained to them the various pieces of radio equipment in the Wireless Room area. We continued with HF and satellite operations. Satellite operations started with a busy AO-92 pass covering most of the continental U.S. Endaf and I generally alternated in working the satellite passes for most of the day, and we were still experiencing busy passes with many stations trying to work W6RO. Along with AO-91 and AO-92, contacts were logged on 3 SSB/CW satellites (AO-7, CAS-4A, CAS-4B) on Memorial Day, for a total of 38 contacts from 8 passes.

Over the three-day weekend, W6RO logged 141 contacts on the satellites. W6RO worked stations across the continental U.S., Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and Costa Rica. Ten other operators kept the W6RO station on the HF bands, as Endaf and I worked the satellite passes. Among the hams who visited and saw the W6RO activities, Joaquin, XE1R/KE0SPY, actually was staying in the hotel on the Queen Mary for the three-day weekend. A long-time HF DXer, Joaquin is now starting to work FM satellites from both Mexico and the U.S. He got interested watching us work satellites, and we enjoyed visiting with him and his wife during the weekend.

Thanks to David Akins, N6HHR, manager of the W6RO Wireless Room, and the Associated Radio Amateurs of Long Beach radio club for working with the Queen Mary's management to ensure W6RO's participation in this event. Endaf Buckley, N6UTC, stayed very busy helping over the weekend, working many satellite passes, putting other passes on Facebook Live video, and operating W6RO via WIRES-X throughout the weekend. 🌐

